

The Essential Essington

A Mini Gallery of Images by Digital Artist Michael Essington

Michael Essington lives in the heart of Los Angeles, right where he wants to be. Since 1995, he's been running his own print and Web design house, E2 Essington Design, in the L.A. suburb of North Hills. He works with very West Coast clients, like Death Row Records, Walt Disney Studios, and Adobe Systems Inc., and such corporate types as Mattel Inc., Pep Boys, and Denny's restaurants.

At once gothic and high-tech, Essington's style leans toward dark and subtle hues. It's definitely reflective of the comic book lore he grew up on. Art was important to the whole family—both of Essington's parents were illustrators at one time. Years ago, some of his mother's artwork won the attention of Walt Disney himself. As a youngster, he absolutely loathed the Norman Rockwell look, gravitating instead toward the style of fantasy artists Frank Rosetta and Boris Leo. Later he came to admire unique stylists M.C. Escher, Salvador Dali, Vincent van Gogh, and Margo Chase.

After earning a B.A. degree in art from California State University, Essington gained an abiding appreciation for a range of classic and nouveau styles, even Norman Rockwell. He feels that imaging is about to come full circle, that the outré will give way to realism and more painterly effects.

Digital imaging has been a natural step in



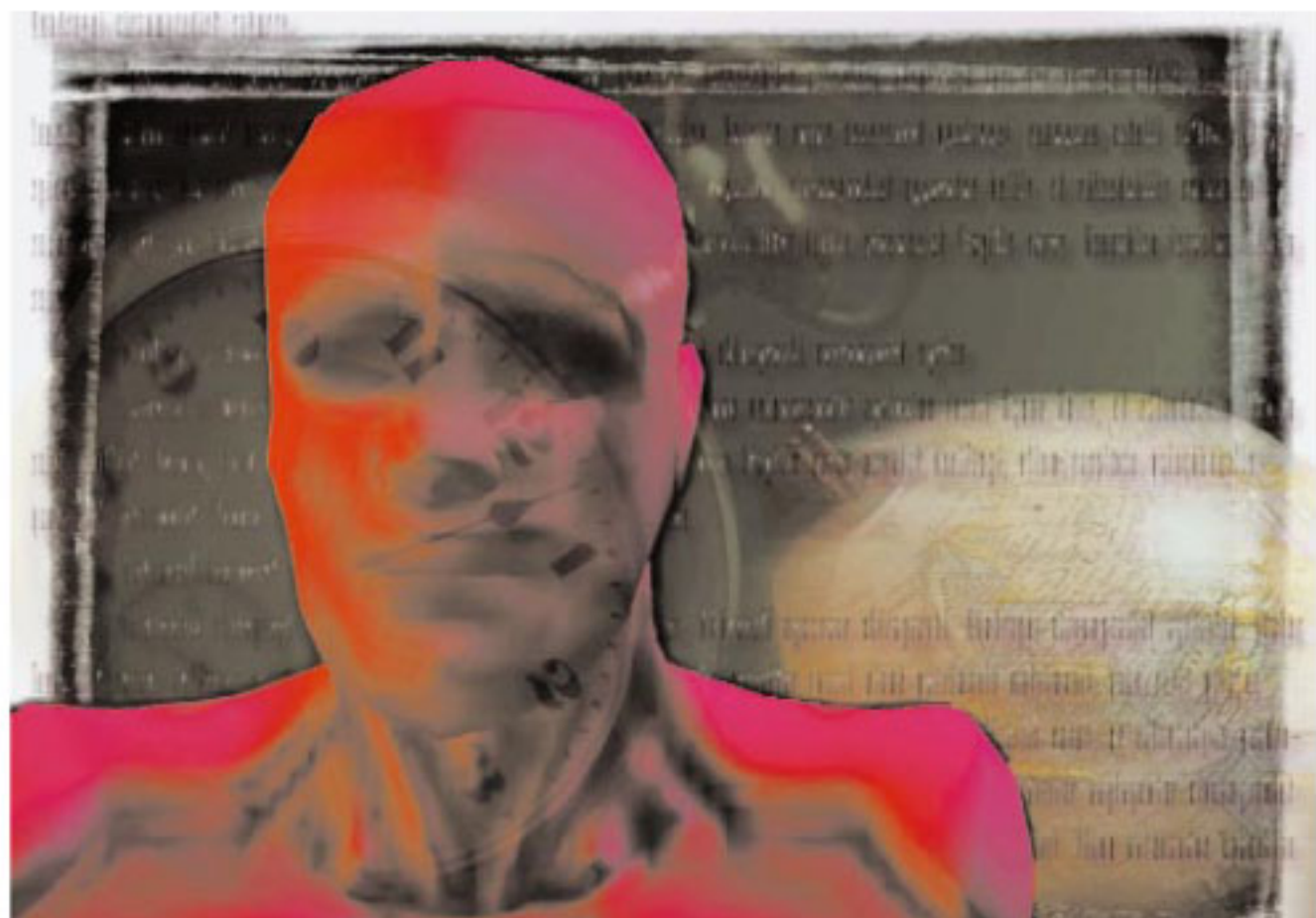
Created for Intergraph Computer Systems, Essington's "Ghosts of Futures Past" was displayed at MacWorld in 1998. It is meant to symbolize the meeting of the past and the future, linked only by the music (as pictured in the middle of the image) and the beauty in the face of the ghost on the left. Essington chose subdued colors, harking back, he said, to the Renaissance masters. Meant for print from its inception, "Ghosts" was created in Photoshop, Poser, and MetaCreations Kai's Power Tools.

Essington's career, though often he still sketches his ideas on paper before booting up his 250 MHz Macintosh (720 MB RAM with a 3GB hard drive). If he's with a client in person, he sketches ideas as they talk, making sure their thinking is in sync. He captures many of the elements in his work with a digital camera, the Apple QuickTake 150, and digitizes others on a Microtek ScanMaker v310. An Epson Stylus Color 600 handles the output.

As far as we can tell, Michael Essington will never be one to talk your ears off. He probably wouldn't tell you he's thoughtful and introspective, not in words. He lets his images say it all. If you'd like to listen, visit the artist's Web site, www.blksg.com/essington. ◀



"Religious Technology" reflects Essington's thoughts about the blurring of the technical with the spiritual. The artist's commissioned work is of course created to please clients. But in his private work, Essington tends toward dark colors that suggest a deeply introspective nature.



In "Red Man," Michael Essington puts a futuristic twist on Old World racism. "What would happen if, as in the movie *Alien Nation*, visitors from other planets came to Earth? What kind of racism would be exhibited toward them?" Characteristically, the artist "pulled back on the extravagant colors" in this image to "focus on the subtleties." The elements are Essington's captures combined with images from his cache of interesting images. Intended for print, "Red Man" was created in Adobe Photoshop and MetaCreations Poser.